

A N
ANSWER

T O

The Reverend Dr. *Snape's*

LETTER

T O T H E

Bishop of *B A N G O R*.

B Y

The Right Reverend Father in G O D

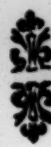
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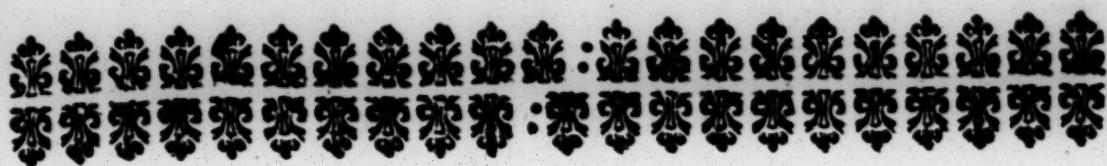
Lord Bishop of *B A N G O R*.

The Sixth Edition.

D U B L I N :

Printed by *A. Rhames*, for *Eliphal Dobson*, at the
Stationer's-Arms in Castle-Street, MDCCXVII.





A N

ANSWER

To the Reverend

Dr. *Snape's* LETTER

T O

The Bishop of BANGOR, &c.

S I R,

I Do in the first place assure You, that I am so far from being uneasy, either at Your *thinking* in a different Way from Me, or at your giving the World an Account of your Thoughts : that I esteem it your Duty both to *judge* for yourself, and to *publish* what you judge necessary for the *Vindication* of the Honour of God, and of Religion. You needed not *My Example*, to justify it. The *Importance* of the Matter, and the *Common Right* of Mankind, are much better Justifications. I only hope that *my Example* did not lead you into the *Manner*, in which you have chose to do it. What Hard and Severe *Appellations* your *inward Conviction* and *private Belief* may have suggested to you, I cannot tell : They can hardly, I think, be worse than the *Outward Expressions* you have been pleased to honour me with, in this Performance. As far as I am concern'd in either of them, I forgive them : And as I am ready to return you all Christian Good Offices, instead of such Treatment as I have met with ; I will content my self with explaining my own Meaning, where I find it mistaken ; and vindicating and justifying

it, where I find it needful. And this for the Sake of the *World* about Us: for whose True, Legal, and Christian *Liberty*, if I have express'd too much Concern; I hope, They will at least pardon me so great an Injury.

The *first Charge* is (p. 9) that you find me striking at the very Root of All Goodness, depreciating the solemn Duty of Prayer, by separating Devotion from it, which is the Life and Soul of it, &c. This is a very heavy Charge upon One, who knows that His Design was to strike at the Root of superstitious Folly, and to establish Prayer, instead of it. But as heavy as it is, I am content to bear it, if any Words I have made use of, are capable of such an Interpretation by any Rules of Grammar, or Common Sense in the World. The Supports of the Charge are these: 1. I say that Prayer is a calm, undisturbed Address to God, &c. 2. That, by the Help of Men, it is come to signify Heat and Flame, in such a Manner, and to such a Degree, &c. *Serm.* p. 7. 8.

The Instances and Texts, you allege against this Account, are these.

1. The Parable about the Unjust Judge, spoken Luke 18. 1. to this End, that Men ought always to pray, and not to faint. Always to pray, and not to faint, is, in other Words, to pray without ceasing, as the Apostle expresses it. In your own Account, it is, to be urgent and importunate, and to solicit with Earnestness; i. e. to repeat our Requests to God, as Persons who are truly in Earnest in what they ask. How this at all contradicts any thing I have said upon this Subject, I am still at a Loss to see: or how it fixeth any such particular Degree of Flame or Heat, as necessarily essential to Prayer, which I complain to have been made so, by the Help of Men, and voluminous Rules of Art. This, and the other Parable you next mention, of the Man borrowing Three Loaves of his Neighbour at Midnight, Luke 11. 5. touch no Circumstance of Prayer, but the repeating it; nor is there any thing in either of Them, besides asking for the same thing, till the Judge and the Neighbour granted it. to avoid Trouble: nor any thing signified by them, nor by any Expression made use of in them, but that Our Prayers to God must be frequent.

2. The Representation of the Publican's smiting upon his Breast, as a Mark of Sorrow, (which is your Second Instance) was agreeable to this Custom of the Eastern Countries. But this is so far from entering into the Essence of the Matter, that no Man is either more or less sensible of his Sins, for striking or not striking his Breast: for shedding, or not shedding, Tears: or any the like Accidents, depending upon Custom, or Constitution. If these, or the like, were essential to Confession, or Prayer, they would have been commanded; and ought indeed to be recommended by Modern Writers, in publick Worship, as well as private. Whereas, if I mistake not, much greater Men than my self. and, in common Estimation, much greater Churchmen, have often been guilty of that Great Crime, of speaking favourably of a Calm Undisturbed Address to God, in publick; and of giving express Directions for it: which I'm sure can never be justified, if the Nature and Essence of Prayer require the contrary.

3. You

3. You mention next, the *Directions* our Lord gives his Disciples to *ask*, and *seek*, and *knock*. But neither *asking*, nor *seeking*, nor *knocking*, (which are only *other Words* for *praying*, as you yourself interpret them,) express any *Circumstances* of the Duty, or Temper of Him who performs it, unless a Real, and sincere Desire of Receiving, Finding, or Entering.

Your next Sentence is very surprizing. "*From none of which Circumstances* (here mentioned) *can we be encouraged to hope that God will hear our Petitions, if they are Cold and Lifeless*. So that it seems, *Cold and Lifeless* are only *Other Words* for *Calm and Undisturbed*. If you truly thought so, yet it would have been right to have let my own Words have stood, where you were drawing up the Stress of your Argument against me. But if you thought them Words of a different Sense. I know of no Justification of them, but this one, too common amongst Writers, *That every thing is lawful against the Man you dislike*. If the End of the Sentence had been express'd in my own Words, *Calm and Undisturbed*, this had not been so shocking. The Zeal of a Reader could not, this way, have been raised so high against an Adversary. Many a Man of an Ordinary Capacity might have thought it tolerable to affirm, that God might possibly hear a *Calm and Undisturbed* Address to Himself. And therefore, it was expedient that *Cold and Lifeless*, should be the Words, put in their room. And then, the Indignation of a Reader might be raised to some due Pitch against a Man, represented as an Advocate for *Cold and Lifeless* Prayers.

Sir, I have no manner of Doubt, but that you have a much greater Skill in Words, whenever you will think, than is necessary to know the Difference between *Calm*, and *Cold*; *Undisturbed*, and *Lifeless*. For my own part, I ever esteem my self most *alive*, when I am most *undisturbed*, and not at all the more *without Life* for not being in a *Passion*. *Calmness* I look upon to be the happiest Circumstance of a *Reasonable Mind*; and Freedom from *inward Perturbation* the greatest Assurance, as well as Instrument, of my understanding truly that I am in earnest in what I am about. A Man of a *Calm Undisturbed* Temper is, to me, a Great Character, whether he is sending up his *Prayers* to God, or making his Professions of Friendship or Duty to Men. I always think, we may depend more upon the *Sincerity* of such an One, than upon One, whose Noise and Outcries, whose disturbed and passionate Behaviour, may raise, in unexperienced Persons, greater Expectations. And, I believe there are Multitudes of Observations which prove this *True in Religion*, as well as in common Life.

4. *Prayer*, (I say it again,) is, in our Lord's own Form, a *Calm, Undisturbed*, Address to God. Let it be read over a thousand times, and examin'd as often; I will venture to affirm, there is not a *Word*, or *Expression* in it, that tends to the raising any Disposition of Mind, like to *Passion*, or *Perturbation*; or like to that *Flame*, or *Heat*, against which alone I have express'd my self, as necessary to *Prayer*.

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The Words made use of in it ; the manner of putting them together ; the Subject Matter of it ; all tend to keep the Soul in a *Calm Undisturbed Temper*, which I think an *Understanding Temper* : and are all so unlike the *Expressions*, or *Words*, of much of our *Modern Devotion*, that I need only desire any impartial Person to compare them, in order to understand, and to approve of, what I have said. In your Great Civility, you are pleased to tell me, that I *may be Calm, and Undisturbed, in saying the Lord's Prayer* : i. e. as you had just before interpreted my Words, *Cold and Lifeless* ; which in the next Paragraph you change for *Indolent and Unmov'd*. To which I have little other Reply to make, but that which a *Christian* ought to make to all Hard Usage. For my own Temper of Mind, I must answer to God ; and therefore, I endeavour to preserve it as *Calm, and Undisturbed*, as I can : being in my self much more assured that I am uniformly and steadily *hearty, and earnest, and truly desirous* of what I ask, when I am *out of a Passion*, than when I am *in one* ; because I think, I much more clearly understand what I am doing. And if you mean any thing by *Warmth, and lively Emotion of Spirit*, inconsistent with that *Calmness and Undisturbedness*, in which the *Understanding* of a Man ought always to be ; as I cannot envy such a Disposition, so all that I have contended, or do contend for, is, that one Man's *Passion or Affection, or Natural Constitution, or Custom*, may not be made necessary and essential to *another Man's* praying to God ; to the Disturbance of Weak and honest Christians, who are rack'd with the *Torment* of imagining They do not pray, because They do not feel what *Others* are pleased to say They ought to feel in themselves.

5. But you go on, and observe that *nothing can more convincingly assure Us, what was our Saviour's Will in this Case, than His own Practice*. And for this, you appeal to *Luk. xxii. 44.* where it is recorded that, *being in an Agony, He pray'd more earnestly, and his Sweat was, as it were, great Drops of Blood falling down to the Ground*. This you allege, (I beg of you to consider it) as a *Practice of His, to assure Us what was his Will* ; or, in other Words, what is our Duty, in *daily constant Prayer* : That is, you first call *This* a *Practice of our Saviour*, which he himself never but this once knew any thing of ; and which was indeed the Effect of an unconceivable *Distress* of Soul, upon that one particular Occasion, to which we know nothing parallel ; you then make *This*, which was the *Effect of Distress*, to be the *Effect of Devotion* : you make *This*, which was the *Cause of his praying*, to be the *Product of it* ; and you make this *Temper* the Rule and Measure of our *Temper and Disposition*, when We pray.

From which many Things will follow, very disagreeable, I am persuaded, to what you in the main intend ; and which, therefore I shall not fix upon You in return to your Civility to Me : but only mention *Two or Three* of them, for the use of such Readers as may not be aware to what Excess their Zeal may carry them. If this

be

be the *Example* of our *Saviour*, to assure us of his *Will* about the *Temper* necessary to *Prayer*; which is the only Point for which it is produced; it will follow that our blessed *Lord* himself never truly pray'd before this time; because He never, as far as we know of, experienced any thing like this within himself. And yet again, if He pray'd now *more earnestly*, it will follow that He had pray'd before; and consequently, that this *Temper*, in which He now was, was not the *Temper* necessary to *Prayer*. And again, if *This* be His *Practice*, assuring Us of his *Will* about our *praying*; it will follow, that *We* his Disciples, can never pray acceptably, unless in such an *Agony*, as that which his here described. But if this be not the Consequence; then this *Disposition*, here described, hath nothing to do with the *Disposition* necessary to *Prayer*: which, to be sure, is the Truth.

6. You mention *Epaphras*, who labour'd fervently in *Prayers*, Col. iv. 12. and the effectual fervent *Prayers* of a righteous Man, in St. James ch. v. 16. It is to little Purpose to observe to you, that there is nothing in the *Original*, of the Words *fervently*, and *fervent*; which You print in remarkable Characters. Because the Words there used may be equivalent to these; and particularly, because I have said nothing in the World, nor never had I thought in my Mind, against such a *Fervency*, or *Warmth*, in *Prayers*, as is consistent with that *Calmness* and *Undisturbedness* of Mind, which is the Ornament and Defence of *Humane Understanding*, in all the Actions, in which it is concerned.

But however I have hitherto differ'd from you, I am perfectly of your Mind, in what you add, that you might have named a *Multitude of other Texts*, as full and opposite as any that have been cited by you. p. 13. Every Verse, if you had so pleas'd, from *Genesis* to the *Revelations*.

It is amazing, you say, to you, with what possible View I could attempt to found a Doctrine of a most pernicious Tendency in it self, on the Ruines of so many Texts of Scripture. As for the Texts of Scripture you have produced; I have shewn them to be perfectly agreeable to what I have said. As to the Tendency of the Doctrine; that must have appear'd, at the same time, in what I have already said. And as to my own View; I am very free to declare it in this, or in any thing else that I do: having no View, (God knows it, and neither the worst Enemy, nor the best Friend, I have had in the World, ever had reason to think otherwise;) I say, No View, but what is Just, Honourable, and Christian. My View in this Particular was, to rid the Minds of as Honest Christians, as any in the World, from that great Uneasiness, which, (if I may guess by myself,) Ministers of Parishes must frequently meet with, arising from such Notions in Modern Books, or Discourses, as perplex them with Doubts about their Incapacity, even whilst They feel Themselves to be sincerely desirous and disposed to perform the Duty of *Prayer*. And, notwithstanding your critical Remark upon *Comma's* and *Stops*, (which,

I confess, is either *above* my CAPACITY; or *beneath* it;) my Sense is so plainly there express'd, whether the *Stops* be false, or right, that I am confident there is no Man of an ordinary Capacity, who understands Words, that could avoid seeing what alone my Complaint was: *viz.* that *by the help of Men, and voluminous Rules of Art, the Word Prayer was come to signify Heat and Flame, in such a Manner, and to such a Degree, that a Man may be in the best Disposition in the World, and yet not be devout to pray* (i. e.) *By those Rules, Men have been taught to work Themelves into Heat and Flame, in such a Manner, and to such a Degree, as something necessary to Prayer, that, according to those Rules, a Man may be in the best Disposition of Mind, and yet not be Devout enough to pray.* And this hath disturbed some of the honestest of *Christians* with Perplexities about their own Incapacity for Prayer, for want of such an *Intenseness of Heat*, as they have found described in some Books, and some Sermons.

The Meaning here was so plain, that, after all your Severity, (p, 14.) you your self are suspicious, you have injured me. And you check yourself, by saying, *Or your Lordship might mean perhaps by those sarcastical Expressions.* (as you are pleas'd to call them,) *above-cited only to reflect upon some Modern Books of Devotion, that recommend Fervency of Prayer.* Sir, It is not only *perhaps* so, but *certainly* so: and this so *certainly*, that all your Zeal, and that of all your Friends put together, and all your Abilities likewise cannot make the Sentence capable of any other Sense. *By the help of Men and voluminous Rules of Art,* are the Words. Only your Representation of my Design here, is not wholly just, at the End. For it was not, to reflect upon *Modern Books that recommend Fervency of Prayer*; but to guard honest Christians against the *Doctrines of Men, both in Books and Sermons, which, under the Pretence of recommending Fervency of Prayer, lead their Understandings into a dark and thick Cloud; and teach them to raise their Passions, till they know not where They are, nor what they are doing: after which bodily Exercise finding the Ease which always results from the venting a present Passion, They are apt to conclude All things to be well with Them; and think They have prayed, and receiv'd the Benefit of Prayer, when They have only first excited a Perturbation in their own Minds, and then find a Quiet, when it hath totally spent it self; as it is natural to do in the Case of All other Perturbations.* Your *Insinuation*, in this *same Page*, about our *Blessed Lord's Agony*, (perhaps as hard and as undeserved, as ever fell from any Pen,) I truly pity and lament, for your own sake, and not for mine.

P. 16. You tell me that I oppose *Heat and Flame* to that *Calmness and Undisturbedness*, which I speak of. If you both could, and would, have represented me fairly, you must have done it otherwise. For there is not a *Common Reader*, who can avoid seeing that I oppose, to the *Calmness and Undisturbedness of Prayer*, that *Heat and Flame*, which hath been taught by *Men* as necessary to *Prayer*; and taught *in such a Manner, and to such a Degree, &c.*

This,

This, and nothing else, have I opposed to the *Calmness* and *Undisturbedness*, I speak of. Therefore, you must first explain, (if it can be explain'd,) what you mean by such *Godly Transport*, as may *disorder the Tranquillity of the Soul, and put it into any Kind of Agitation*; and the like Words: before I can possibly tell you, whether I approve, or disapprove, them. If you mean by them *Heat*, and *Flame*, in such a Manner, and to such a Degree, that Men sincerely disposed to ask of God every thing necessary, and to acknowledge all his Favours, are not according to your Rules *devout enough to pray acceptably*; I have already declared my self against them, and now again do so, most heartily. But if you mean not so; I have said no more against Them, than you have. I neither envy, nor censure you, in whatever you think fit to *suffer*, in your *Devotions*. I sincerely wish you happy in *Them*, and in every other Circumstance of your Life. Only I beg it may not offend you, that I desire no *Agitation*, nor *Disorder*, in my own Soul. and that I endeavour to keep such Words out of all *Directions* about *Prayer*, consider'd as the *Duty* of every *Christian*. If you please to go on to represent this, as not *being affected* with the *Majesty* of God; or the *Sense* of Sin; or the *Mercy* of God; or the *Joys* of Heaven; or, as pleading that *every Power* of our *Souls* must lie *dormant*, because I would have the *Understanding*. (that *unregarded Power* of the *Soul*), awake, and unclouded; I must be content. But you may with as much reason argue that *I am now dead, or asleep, because I am undisturbed* at the *Usage* you have thought fit to give to me.

Your mention of my *New Sect* of *Protestant Quietists* may, for ought I know, be accounted *Witty*: but is certainly much more applicable to *Those* who contend for *Disorder* and *Agitation* of *Soul*, than to *Those* who contend against those *Tumults* of the *Mind*. For, tho' the same sort of *Outward Expressions* may be wanting; yet, the *Essence* of *Quietism* consists in *Passion* raised within; in such a *Disorder* and *Agitation* of *Soul*, as overclouds the *Understanding*, and by degrees dismises and banishes it from bearing any part in the *Work*.

What my *Notions* of *Prayer*, and the *Temper* of *Prayer*, are, must by this time have appear'd to all impartial Persons. I beg Leave just to mention, that it will farther appear, what They have long been, by publishing, as soon as I can conveniently, several *Forms* of *Prayer*, which were drawn up for private Use many Years ago; and which I think, I have now a just Occasion to trouble the World with.

I have only one thing before I leave this Head, and that is, to entreat you not to judge when I design to be *Witty*, or *Ironical*: as you do, p. 10. Believe me, I never was more serious. Nor can I think it unbecoming either a *Christian*, or a *Bishop*, to take Notice of the *great Corruptions* of Men, in a matter of *Universal Importance*. It is so far from *hurting*; that it is indeed *to preserve the very Vitals* of all that is good, to remove and destroy those *Corruptions*.

You next, touch a little upon what I have said upon the *Love of God*: But you are very good here. You are so kind as to suppose that I intend- ed my *Reflections* against Those who have *overstrained that Duty*, &c. That is, Those, against whom alone I could intend them. You might have been as good, under the *former head*, where it was as plainly said: and then a great deal of Trouble had been saved. But even here, you can't forbear your Complaint that I have *set it*, that is, The *Love of God as low as possible*; and that I *seem particularly careful that Men may not offend in the Excess of This, or any thing else that is Good*.

That many *ordinary Christians* should be led by *Modern Directions*, to express their *Love of God* in a manner adapted to the Excess of Humane Passion; or to think They can perceive when They love God, by any Disorder, Agitation, or Discomposure, effected by Art; or even to be angry with Any One who endeavours to teach Them, not how to feel when They love God, (which hath no Certainty in it) but how to know it; as some Patients may rage at their Physicians: All this may be supposed, without great Astonishment. But that a Learned Man, and a Preacher of the Gospel, should declare that to place the Love of God in keeping his Commandments, is to set it as low as possible, may be justly wonder'd at. What will be the Fate of Religion at last, when keeping God's Commandments; the most Extensive and the most Comprehensive Expression in the World, taken in all possible Duty; is esteem'd and publicly branded, as a low Account of the Love of God? And what will be the Fate of the Christian Religion in particular, when that very Description, which is in these very Words often repeated in the Original Writings of it, is treated as something below the Dignity of the Duty so described? So far from it, that I shall ever esteem that a Duty, High and Great, which comprehends in it the Imitation of the Great God, and the Highest Perfection of Humane Nature. If by this, I can seem careful that Men should not offend in the Excess of any thing good: I would beg to know what is Good, if keeping God's Commandments be not; and it being careful that Men should keep the Commandments of God, rather than the Fantastic Rules of Idle and Passionate Men, deserves to be thus represented. I know of no such Thing possible, as Excess in what is truly Good. It is an Absurdity in Terms, of Excess, in what weak Men have placed in the seat of Good; and dress'd up in the Garb of Good; and what hath been too successful in dislodging and banishing what is Good: Of this, we have seen and may see enough; as long as the Passions of Men are brought in, as Essential parts of Religion. And here indeed, was all my Care concern'd, (in the usefulness and necessity of which, I am more confirmed by what You have now urged,) that Men should not offend God, and disturb their Honest and Well meaning Neighbours, by making That necessary to any Duty of Religion, which hath nothing to do with it; not that Men should not offend in the Excess of what is Good; but in the Excess of that superstitious Folly which in many Christian Countries hath usurped the place of what is Good; and hath the same Natural Tendency every where. And in this Care, as the Best of all Offices which I am capable of doing to Mankind, I hope to spend, the remainder of a short and Uncertain Life.

You come now p. 18. to the consideration of the Nature of the *Church of Christ*. Upon which Subject, that the Reader may be led a little clearly and distinctly, into what He is to judge about; I shall separate Your *Representation* of My sense, from Your own: which indeed You have mingled together. By which means I shall the better be able to do You and my Self, Justice.

1. The Church of Christ, You say, according to Me, is the Kingdom of Christ. I really thought that All Christians, in the midst of All their Contradictions,

traditions, still Profess'd that the Church of Christ was the Kingdom of Christ. I always thought indeed, that it would be much more consistent with many of their Doctrines and Claims, nor to use that Expression. But I little thought to see the time, when it would be openly fix'd as a Peculiarity upon any One particular Christian, that, according to Him, the Church of Christ was the Kingdom of Christ. But You go on. *And a Kingdom of which He (Christ) is himself not only the sole King, but the sole Law-giver, the sole Judge, the sole Interpreter of his own Laws; a Kingdom in which He neither acts himself, nor hath invested any One else with an Authority to act for Him.* You observe farther, that I am pleas'd to infer, by one of the oddest Consequences that ever was drawn from any Proposition, that because He never interpose himself, therefore He hath left no Deputy: Which, You remark, if He did interpose, there would Certainly be no Occasion for. Here, I suppose some part of a Sentence was lost by the Printer: For after this, without any proper stop, or Grammatical Connexion, You go on with Your own Sense upon this Subject, which I shall presently transcribe.

In the mean while, I must stop a little to wonder what harm it could have done to the Cause of Truth, to have permitted my own Sentiments to have stood in my own Words. But this would not have done the Business so effectually. My Words are these. *Serm. p. 11. As the Church of Christ is the Kingdom of Christ, He himself is King: And in this it is implied That He is himself: the sole Law-giver to his Subjects; and himself the sole Judge of their Behaviour, in the Affairs of CONSCIENCE, and ETERNAL SALVATION:--That He hath, in those Points, (viz. of CONSCIENCE and ETERNAL SALVATION,) left behind Him no visible, humane Authority; No Vicegerents who can be said Properly to Supply his Place; No Interpreters upon whom his Subjects are absolutely to depend; No Judges over the Consciences or Religion of his People.* This You think fit to represent, 1. As if I had said, not only King, but Law-giver, Judge, and Interpreter of his own Laws. Whereas I say, He is not the sole King, if He be not the sole Law giver and Judge; and, as for his being Interpreter of his own Laws, I positively deny that He himself ever interposeth to assert the true Interpretation of them, p. 13. But this is not all. For, 2. By way of Conciseness, You leave out all the Words which can represent my Sense. And in this short Sentence, You have discarded too many at once, any Man of Temper would think: such as these, in the Affairs of Conscience and Eternal Salvation ----- in those Points ----- Properly to Supply his Place ----- upon whom his Subjects are absolutely to depend ----- the Consciences and Religion of his People.

You say, I represent the Church of Christ as a Kingdom in which Christ neither acts himself; nor hath invested any one else with an Authority to act for Him. Lay your hand upon your Heart, and ask, Is this a Christian, Humane, Honest, Representation of what your own Eyes read in my Sermon? What I say is, that Christ never interposeth, since His first promulgation of his Law, either to convey Infallibility ----- or to assert the True Interpretation of it ----- If you oppose me in this; You maintain that Christ doth interpose, in order to convey Infallibility, or to assert the True Interpretation of his Law. Read this Proposition: and either affirm it to be true; or else acknowledge that You are far from representing, or contradicting, my Sense. His first promulgation of his Law, was his acting visibly with Kingly Authority in his Kingdom: But to represent me, as saying, that He doth not act at all in his Kingdom, since that, because I say, He doth not interpose to convey Infallibility, or to interpret his own Laws, is to resolve to represent as You think fit. Popery may well Triumph if a Protestant may not say this, without such a Treatment.

The other part of this concise Representation is, that I maintain *Christ to have intrusted No one with an Authority to Act for Him*. If by an *Authority to act for Him*, You mean, an *Absolute Authority* to make New Laws, or interpret Old Ones, relating to the Eternal Salvation of Christians, and binding their Consciences absolutely: I do indeed, maintain it, that He hath left no such *Absolute Authority* in any MAN, or MEN. And so do You; whether You like, or no, to hear it. But if you mean any thing else by an *Authority to Act for Him*; You know, I have express'd no more against it, than You have.

The next part of this Representation of my Sense, is, that I infer, by an *Odd Consequence*, that because He never interposes Himself, therefore He hath left no Deputy. My reasoning is this. If Christ saw fit to interpose, either to make Men infallible; or to assert the True interpretation of His Laws; then it might be supposed that They might be vested with Authority to interpret his Laws: because They would then do it, under his Direction, and the Kingdom would still be His, and not Theirs. But, as He doth not, (We Protestants say) thus interpose; therefore, to vest an *Absolute Authority* (as my Words are), with Men, under the Notion of *Interpreters*, is to transfer the Kingdom from Christ, who doth not so interpose, to Men, who are, upon this supposition, the *Legislators* in this Kingdom. How Odd this Reasoning may be to some persons, I know not. But to my self it is no more than this, that They are truly *Legislators* who, without any Interposition from another, can absolute determine the meaning of any Law. Your remark therefore, that, if Christ did interpose Himself, there would be no occasion for his leaving any Deputy, hath no relation to what I affirm: viz. that if Christ did see fit to interpose to direct Men in their Interpretations; then He would still be *Legislator*: whereas, if They have an *Absolute Authority*, without his Infallible Assistance, to put an *Interpretation* upon his Laws, They then are the *Legislators*, and not Christ.

We now come to Your own Sentiments, which You thus Express, in the same Sentence, p. 19 *At his Departure into Heaven, when he was no longer to Govern his Church in Person, He provided for the good Government of it, by Others, whom he Commisſion'd to teach and expound his Laws, to bear rule and Authority over his Subjects, to be his Vic. gerent, to act in his name and stead, and to perpetuate a Succession of Men thro' all the succeeding Ages of the World, in whom the Same Powers should be lodg'd. And tho' He made none of Them infallible, nor exempted Them from Humane Frailties, yet still He required His Church to obey Them, and to be guided by their Instructions, where They were not contrary to His. The places of Scripture to prove these Assertions are so numerous, &c*

As to the first part of this, His Teaching, Directing, and Governing, by His Apostles, whom He conducted Himself by his own Spirit; We have no difference. He promulgated his Law that way, to Those who could know it no other way. He was in all that, *King*, and *Legislator*, Himself; to whose Words the *Apostles* declared They could add Nothing; and from whose Laws They could not diminish. But the *Question* is about the latter part of this *Account*; or about the *Successors* of the *Apostles* in their Good Work, and their Authority. When You speak of a *Succession of Men*, in whom the SAME Powers were to be lodged, which the *Apostles* had; either You mean that Christ order'd that Men, not conducted by his Infallible Spirit, had at first: or else not. In the first sense, the same Powers may signify the same Powers. But in the latter sense, the same Powers must mean not the same Powers. If You take the first Sense, You contradict me: but you support the claims of Popery, which can stand upon no other bottom. In the latter, You do not at all oppose Me, because You do not determine in what Their Powers differ from the *Apostles* and in what They agree. When you produce

produce your *Numerous* Texts to prove that *Christ* Commission'd the *Apostles* to perpetuate a Succession of Men, in whom the *SAME* Powers They had receiv'd, should be lodg'd; or that the *Fallible* Successors of the *Apostles* in their Good Work, have that *Absolute Authority*, which neither was nor could be claim'd by the *Apostles* themselves, in any Cases, but those in which They profess'd They had receiv'd *Infallible Directions* immediately from *Christ*: then, I will acknowledge, You oppose me; and I believe all the World will acknowledge You oppose the whole foundation of *Protestantism*, also.

You have therefore added, *Tho' Christ hath made none of them infallible, yet still He requires his Church to obey Them*. How? Absolutely? Without reserve? Upon the argument of Their *Authority* only? If not; I beg to know what is all this to me, declaring against an *Absolute Authority* in Men? You saw how this pinch'd: and therefore You go on thus, *And to be guided by their Instructions*, Again I ask, what? *Absolutely? Upon Their Word, and Authority?* No. But *to be guided by Their Instructions, where They are not Contrary to His*: Which again You repeat and acknowledge, p. 26. And is This the whole which even You, at last can make of the matter, after All Your *Boasted Zeal* for *Mere Authority*? I beseech You, Why may not I be allowed to say, that No Man upon Earth hath an *Absolute Authority*, in *Christ's Kingdom*, as well as You? Only, because I stand to it, and do not unsay it again in other Places, to the great Diversion and Advantage of the *Roman Catholics*; and of the Enemies of All Religion? Now, Sir, If I am not to obey, where Their Instructions are *contrary to Christ's*, (as You declare in this Place;) then I am under a strict Obligation to examine whether Their Instructions are *contrary to Christ's*; or not: Unless You will order me to take their Word absolutely that They are so. If I am to examine this; I am to be determin'd in it by my own Judgment and Conscience, and not by Theirs. If I find *Their Instructions*, agreeable to the Will of *Christ*, I obey Them. Why? Not because of *Their Authority*; but because of *Christ's Authority*. I obey Him, not Them, by your own Rule here laid down. If upon the most serious Consideration I judge them contrary to *Christ's will*; You allow that I must, upon pain of God's Displeasure, neglect all Authority They profess to derive from Him; and obey *Christ*. By your own Rule therefore, You see, that it is *Christ's Authority* I obey in this Case; that They are, none of Them, in any proper Sense, *Christ's Vicegerents*, standing in his stead: for You allow that They may instruct contrary to his Will; and that I may obey Him, in the very Act of disobeying Them; that their Authority is not *Absolute*; nay, that I obey, after such Examination, *Christ*, and not Them, *Glorious Absolute Authority* indeed in Your own Account to which *Christ's Subjects* owe no obedience, till they have examin'd into His own Declarations; and then They obey, not this *Authority*, but Him! Do but uniformly and steadily maintain this *one Limitation*: and I will venture to affirm, We plead the same Cause, and stand and fall together. You will perhaps esteem this a Dishonour. I look upon it in another view; and will shew you, all thro' this appearance of Difference, that I value this Honour too much, to let it be taken from me.

And hence, as we pass, let me observe the only possible meaning of those Words of mine, Sermon. p. 15. which You greatly mistake, or abuse, p. 27. in order to shew that the Word *Absolute*, over and over again repeated by me and several other the like Words, are not to be regarded in your *Representation* of my Sense: and then, let All Men judge, how hard it is, to have my Sentiments laid before the World, not as They truly are, but as an Adversary wishes Them to be, to increase his own Imaginary Triumphs. My Words, are these----- If they (i. e. any Men) have this Power of Interpreting, or adding

ding Laws, and judging Men, (now let the Reader observe) in SUCH A SENSE, that Christians shall be INDISPENSABLY, and ABSOLUTELY obliged to obey Those Laws, and to submit to those Decisions: INDISPENSABLY, and ABSOLUTELY, obliged, These are the Words; and Words which cut off all Examination and Consideration whether Those Decisions be contrary to Christ's Will or not; and the Supposition at the beginning is of Christ's not interposing to direct, or rectify, these Decisions. — If this be the Case, I say, whether They happen to agree with Christ, or to differ from Him, as long as They are the Lawgivers and Judges, in the Sense there laid down, without any interposition from Christ, They are Kings of this Kingdom: and not Christ Jesus. Here the Case is put of No Examination, No Consideration, whether their Decisions are contrary to Christ's will or not; (as in the Church of Rome;) and of an absolute Indispensable Obligation to submit to the Mere Authority of the Deciders; (as the Condition is of Christians in that Church:) In this Case, I say that this is the Kingdom of these Men and not of Christ, because They are obeyed absolutely and implicitly, without any Regard to Christ's own Decisions; and that it makes no difference, in this Case of Absolute and Indispensable Obedience, without comparing the Laws of Men with the Laws of Christ, whether the former happen to agree with the latter, or not. Still, as long as the Obedience is Absolute and Indispensable, it is Obedience to Men as Kings; and not to Christ. Is not this a Demonstration, to the Eye-sight of the World, in the Romish Church? And do You not see that this is nothing to Us Two, who agree in maintaining No such Absolute, Indispensable Obligation to Submit; but a Right not to obey when those Decisions are contrary to Christ's; which is built entirely upon a Right to examine whether They are so or not. Read therefore your 28th Page, where You represent Me as equally pleading against All Commands, &c. and compare it with your own Acknowledgment, that Christians must not obey Any Commands of Men, when They are contrary to Christ's; and see whether This, rightly understood, and steadily maintain'd, be not in effect the very same thing which I have said; that to obey, upon any other Bottom but that, is to obey Men, as Kings of Christ's Kingdom, and not Christ himself: And that We both sometimes agree in this great Crime, of asserting Christ's Kingdom to be Christ's Kingdom.

Having clear'd up this only Point of any seeming Difficulty thro' Your whole Work; (which indeed was as clear as possible in my whole Sentence; and which You could not have made obscure, but by representing it in a separate and disjointed manner;) much less Time will be necessary upon what follows.

P. 20. You go on, (after having spoken about the Apostles Days.) to say, If Christ had made no Provision, by substituting Vicegerents to act for, and under Him, to satisfy the Doubts of his People, and explain the meaning of his Laws, by comparing Them with one another, to restrain Offenders, and keep in awe the Disturbers of its Peace and Unity: if No care had been taken ----- to keep his Subjects in order, the Church of Christ must have been a Babel, and his Kingdom a Realm of Confusion. Now apply your own limitation, that No Christian is to obey These Substitutes or Vicegerents, where Their Instructions, and Directions, are contrary to Those of Christ; of which every Christian is to judge: and then determine, whether this Objection ought to affright Us from maintaining Christ's right to be obey'd, in opposition to these Substitutes, when the Case so happens; or from defending his Subjects against all such Absolute Authority as lays Them under an Obligation to a blind and implicit Obedience. Christ, We can answer, knew best what power to lodge with Men, in order to avoid Confusion, as well as to instruct. And therefore, if No Command or Law contrary to His can bind Christians; We can both answer Securely that We must compare all Mens commands, with His, before

fore We obey; and that He himself desired no greater Order than what is consistent with this Right and Duty of all his Subjects, to examine whether what is commanded be not contrary to his Will; and to act accordingly.

So, when it is alledged against Us, what you mention in the next Paragraph, that *there must be, and is, in Christ's Kingdom, a subordination of Ministers who are the Judges and Guides of His People, by virtue of an Authority that He has delegated to them*: We can answer, that neither their Judgment nor their Guidance can be *absolute*, because We are not bound to obey in any thing contrary to the Instructions of Christ; which therefore, We our selves must consider in order to form our own Judgment concerning the Will of Christ, in the Affair of *Salvation*: and that We are well assured that He hath delegated no *Authority* to any Men, inconsistent with our obligation to obey no Laws, of Directions, which are contrary to His.

If They again urge Us (as You go on p. 21.) *with any other of those Images, under which the Scripture represents the Church, as an orderly and well-governed Society*: We can answer Them, that We can never think Christ's Church so well-governed a Society, as when Christ's Laws govern it; that We have not said one word against the Order, or the Good Government of it; but only asserted the *Right and Duty* of all Christians to consider the Laws of Christ himself, because We are sure of his displeasure, if We obey any *Authority* upon earth contrary to His Will: and that We are for all Order, and Good Government, consistent with that *Right* of not obeying against our own Consciences; which He did not to be sure destroy by any *Images* of Order and Decency, under which His Church is represented. Take it under the figure of a *Body*, a *Building*, a *large Family*, (why not a *small one*, when that cannot alter the Case, as to the *Essentials* of it?) or take it as an *Army*; or as what you please: These all help to clear up what I have said, and what your kind limitation before mention'd implies in it. If it be a *Body*; the *Head* is Christ: If a *Building*; the *Foundation Stone* is Christ: and the *Apostles* themselves no otherwise *Foundation-stones*, but as They are represented, even by themselves, as the *Preachers* of what He immediately dictated to them. But, as for all their *Successors*; They are not the *Foundation*, but part of the *Building* it self erected upon that *Foundation*. If it be a *large Family*; then it follows that No *Servant*, of the highest Rank, hath any *Authority*, disagreeable to the *Will* of the *Master* of the *Family*; nor the *Other Servants* any obligation, (supposing the *Master* himself absent, and to have left behind Him his *Will* in writing for the use of them All) to submit to the *Dictates* of any *Servant* of their *Master*, without comparing them with that written Will. But if it be consider'd as an *Army*, then it is as plain, that the *Chief General* is the Ruler of it; and that the *Orders* of the *Chief General*, supposing them to be given by Himself, for the use of the *Soldiers* in His Absence, are the *Directions* for the *Soldiers*, in all their Service and Warfare. And I do not doubt, as You say, that the Case is still the same, if you take a view of the Church under any other Image. It will still appear more plainly, that Christ is King in his own Kingdom; and that the Order, which He design'd in his Kingdom, is not at all disturbed, by any thing that I have said against the *Absolute Authority* of Those who teach in his Church; or by any thing that You have said against the *Absolute Submission* of Those who hear.

As for my Self, to whom you apply in so warm a manner, p. 24. I profess to you, and to all the World, I *disclaim* and *disdain*, All Powers inconsistent with Christ's sole *Authority* of *Legislation*, and *Judgment*, in Matters relating to *Eternal Salvation*. I have already vindicated my Sense; that by *Absolute Authority*, I meant *Absolute Authority*: and shewn that, contrary to your Representation, p. 28. I have taught Men, (and I here declare, I will go on to teach Them) to receive No Commands in Matters relating to their *Eternal Salvation*.

vation from any Superiors, whether Spiritual or Temporal, absolutely, and implicitly, upon the ground of *Mere Authority*, without examining Them by the Laws of Christ, and finding Them agreeable to Those Laws: Because they are not *lawful* to Them, by your own Rule, till They find Them so upon that Comparison; and because, to do Any thing, *materially lawful*, upon the same Principle, which would carry Them to do the same thing were it never so *unlawful*, cannot be consistent with *Christianity*. All this, which I have been now saying, will appear still more clearly, if possible, in the *ANSWER*, which I am preparing, to the *REPRESENTATION* of the Committee of the Lower-House of Convocation.

P. 29. The *Passage* You are here disturbed at, about the *Altering* or *Adding* to the *Sanctions* of *Christ's Law*, is no more than this *Syllogism*. The affixing the proper Rewards and Punishments to the Behaviour of *Christians*, as *Christians*, is an Act of *Christ's Regal Power*. Whoever alter the Nature of *These*, or add to Them, do truly Themselves affix *Rewards* and *Punishments*. Therefore, They are *SO FAR* Kings themselves. That, according to me, They *De throne* *Christ* from his *Spiritual Kingdom*, is your own Hard, and Unjust Comment. But that, *as far* as They alter his *Sanctions*, or add New ones; that I say *SO FAR*, They reign in their own *Kingdom*; is, in my Opinion, as clear a Proposition as this, that, *as far* as New *Sanctions* are brought into *Christ's Religion*; *so far*, New *Sanctions* are brought in. If *Christ* brought them in; or commanded Them to be brought in: They are *His*. If not; They are *not His*. If any *Others* can, even by *Right*, bring them in; yet still it is true that *These Others* are *SO FAR* Kings, I cannot see which of these *Propositions* can be denied. But I shall more at large explain, and fix this point, in the *Answer* beforementioned.

You do me one piece of Justice, p. 33. when you assure the World, in your way, that *I have dealt my Favours with an Equal and Undistinguish'd Hand to All Churches, and All Religions*: If you mean this by it, that I disdain the poor *Sophistry* of claiming that *Mere Authority* to *Our selves*, which We deny constantly to *Others*; and that I do not think any *Man's Religion*, considered in it self, an *Argument* why He should be deprived of any of the *Common Rights of Society*, in this World. But if you mean any thing else; I must assure you, it is your own Invention. The *Exclusion* of the *Papists* from the *Throne*, was not upon the Account of their Religion. All the World knows that it was upon the Experience that They could not be trusted with the *Rights* and *Liberties* of the *Nation*. I have contended indeed elsewhere, that it was their *Unhappy Religion*, which alone made Them incapable in Themselves, of Governing this *Protestant Nation* by the Laws of the Land: And this, in order to justify the *Exclusion* of *All Papiſts*. But the Ground of their *Exclusion*, was not their *Religion*, consider'd as such: but the fatal, natural, certain Effect of it upon Themselves, to our *Destruction*. The certain Danger of *Our Liberties* and *Properties*, was to *Us*, the sole Ground of it. But I will venture to add one thing: That I have a great deal of Reason to think that, if I had really shaken those *Acts* which exclude *Papists*, I should have experienced much more of *Civility*, than I have lately done.

But for One *Christian Divine*, who is endeavouring to preach *Religion* and the *Gospel*, to be told by *Another Christian Divine*, that He contradicts *ACTS of Parliament*, and Laws made by Men; would have a very odd Appearance: if any thing could be calmly consider'd, amidst the Passions of Men. It cannot certainly be intended as an *Argument*, unless it rely upon this glorious Foundation, (becoming a *Christian Divine* to own,) that every *Preacher of the Gospel*, instead of preaching All, and every thing, which He finds *there*, is obliged to sit down, and consider *Humane Laws*; every *Act of Parliament*, and every Clause in every *Act of Parliament*; and to find or make the *Laws* of the

the Gospel agreeable to Them, before He presumes to preach, or to inculcate, Them. Neither Christianity, nor the Reformation, could have shewn their Heads, against such Irresistible Arguments, as These. One Request I must here add, and it is but common Justice which I will ask, and that is, That you would fix No Consequences upon Me, which I do not my Self expressly own. If You judge of every Thing in Christ's Religion by Acts of Parliament; then it will be an infallible Rule for You to go by, This, or That, contradicts Something in some Act of Parliament; and therefore cannot be True. And if you do; still Many Points may seem to you to follow from a Particular Doctrine, which the Person who teacheth it, never maintain'd; and therefore, Which He ought not, by the known Rule, to be charged with. But methinks, the Enquiry to a Christian Divine is, Whether any Doctrine or Position, about Christ's Religion, be agreeable to the Statute Law of Christ, and the whole Tenor of the Gospel.

From p. 34. to p. 37. You set forth the Tragical Effects of my Doctrine, not only upon the Polity of the Church of England; but upon All Ecclesiastical Polity; as your Phrase is: And all this, by way of Consequences drawn from my Principles, without so much as referring to the Passages, in which my Principles are laid down. If my Reasonings are right, You say, there never was any Part of the Christian Church, either in the Days of the Apostles, or at any Time since, in any Nation of the World, that has not, as a Church, acted in direct Opposition to the Will of our Blessed Saviour, and usurped an Authority, that He had never delegated. This is a Charge indeed, against All Churches; which I neither made, nor ever indeed admitted into my Thoughts. We will try, if You please, from My Principles. Christ is sole Law-giver and Judge in Matters of Eternal Salvation: And hath delegated NO ABSOLUTE (i. e. as you own) Unlimited Authority to Men, to which Christians are absolutely (i. e. as You own) Unconditionally, without Examination, obliged to submit: Or, in your Words, and according to your own Doctrine, to which They are obliged to submit in any thing contrary to His Will. This is All that I have taught. From hence You say it follows, that The Apostles themselves, (as You farther explain it, p. 35.) and All Churches in their days, and ever since, usurp'd an Authority never delegated to them.

Now, I confess, I always understood the New Testament it self to teach Us that the Apostles were directed by Christ himself, and by His Spirit. So that He was still, in ALL which They ordain'd, as Parts of His Religion, truly the Legislator, and King. The Authority was His in the strictest Sense; as They often professed: and They had no Authority to ordain Any Thing relating to Eternal Salvation, but what He expressly and immediately revealed, and dictated to Them. They were sent, taught, directed, immediately, by Christ. According to my Rule therefore, Wherever He interposeth to convey Infallibility, He is the Legislator, properly speaking. And that was the Case. So that the Apostles, You see, were far from deserving this Hard Usage at your hands; having claim'd No Absolute Authority, but in Things immediately receiv'd from Him: that is, No Absolute Authority to Themselves, but to Him, properly speaking.

If the Case be otherwise with Any Churches, I am heartily sorry. But I profess, I never knew, nor heard of, any Church upon Earth (except the Church of Rome) in its latter corrupted Estate, which ever dared to claim such an Absolute Authority. And this Church itself first thinks it necessary to out-face us, that Christ doth still interpose to convey Infallibility. What follows, I suppose, is to explain the meaning of this: And therefore, let us consider the Instances You mention.

1. According to my Reasonings, You say, All who have been interpreting His Laws, have been making Laws for Him. I hope not. I am sure, for my self,

self, I endeavour to interpret *His Doctrines*, without the Thought that All who hear me, are indispensably obliged to receive My *Interpretation*. You know, Sir, in your Conscience, that I have said not a single Word against any *Interpretative Authority*, even of the weakest Men, but an *Absolute Authority* of Imposing Their Sense upon Christ's Laws. You know that You your self declare, No *Christian* is obliged to receive Any *Interpretation contrary to Christ's Will*; to which therefore He is obliged to compare it always: And supposing it should be found, upon Enquiry, to be agreeable to it; He ought not, by your own Rule, as well as mine, to receive it, before he finds it so. So that We stand, in this, and tall together. If these Consequences are so terrible against Me; they are the very same against You.

2. So again, in the Case of *Impos'd Terms of Communion*; I have declared, in the Sermon, against Nothing but the *Absolute Indispensable Obligation* of *Christians*, to submit to Them, Right, or Wrong, without examining whether They are agreeable to Christ's Will, or not. You in this agree with me; and declare that the Christian People are not obliged to submit, in any Matters *contrary to Christ's Will*: to which therefore, They are obliged to compare Every Thing. What therefore is our Difference? And upon what Accounts must I alone suffer such Outcries: merely because I faithfully and uniformly maintain this Truth; and You think it better to maintain it for once secretly, and in a little corner, and to give it up, whenever You think fit?

3. Again, You go on, *Nor can any Number of Wise and Good Men*, (according to my Reasonings,) *agreeing together in the same Notions, and assembled by Legal Authority, in due Subordination to the Civil Magistrate, tho' with the most Unanimous Consent, establish any Rules, or Ordain any Method of Church-Government, that shall be binding, even for Peace and Quiet's sake, to any Others*. Here again, We must prevail, or fall, together. For, As to Conscience; (which is our Province, as long as We have any Consciences of our own left;) As to Conscience, I say, You have declared in this very Book, (the Force of Truth hath extorted it from you, in the midst of All your Zeal) that No such *Decisions, or Declarations* are binding upon Any *Christian* in the World, *if They be contrary to Christ's Will*; and that No Notion, therefore, of *Peace and Quiet*, (which, by the way, are very *soft Words* for a *Writer* to put instead of the Authority and Right of Governours, whilst He is contending Zealously only about these latter;) nay, that No Argument in the World is to persuade any Christian to submit, in Points *contrary to Christ's Will*: To which therefore, He himself is to compare every thing.

This is *your own Rule*. And therefore, *Expose, Vilify, Use* Me as you please: I have this satisfaction, That You come, your self, into this whole Condemnation; and not only You, but indeed All, even Every Man of the Church of *England*; Every Man of Those themselves, who have treated me in the same unhandsome manner upon this Account. It is You, Sir, who, by your own Rule, have cut off all Interpretations of Christ's Laws; All *Impos'd Terms* of Communion; All Obligation to yield to the Mere Authority of the most *Unanimous Synod* in the World; All *Articles and Creeds*, drawn up by fallible Men; All *Acts*, even of *General Councils*; All *Canons, Rules, or Ordinances*. Call them what you please, You have, your Self, cut off All *Absolute Obligation* of Submission; which is exactly the same with taking away the *Absolute Authority* of Church-Governours. You have assured Us, that, let Them gather Themselves together, and frame what Rules They think proper, to Oblige (as your Phrase is,) Others to a *Unity of Profession*, p. 36. You have assured Us, I say, by your former *Limitations*, p. 20. and 26. that Those Others are NOT obliged, without examining into the Will of Christ, by any of their Rules; nay, that They are obliged not to submit, if They find them contrary to His Will. And can

can there be an *Absolute Authority* in *Those* who make *Those Rules*, whilst there can lie no *Absolute Obligation* to submit to them, upon *Those*, for *whom* They are made? The Difference therefore between Us, is only in *Words*: and sometimes, hardly in *Words*.

And now, Sir, if *No Bishop ought to take his Place in the Principal Synod*; or to take the *Subscriptions* of *those whom he Ordains*; or *Exercise almost any Episcopal Act*, p. 36. unless He claims to Himself an *Absolute Power and Authority*, to which All His Hearers, or His Flock, are so indispensably obliged to submit, in *Matters of Conscience and Eternal Salvation*, that they must not so much as seriously compare His Directions with the *Will of Christ*, to find whether They agree with it, or not; If this be so; I confess my self very unfit for so great an Honour. I disclaim, and disdain it: And so I hope, and believe, doth Every One of my Brethren. I should not act agreeably to your own Rule, if I did not. You declare that *No Christian* ought to submit in *Points* determin'd contrary to *Christ's Will*. And therefore, I hope, I may have your *Consent*, to claim All the *Privileges* of a *Christian Bishop*; without claiming that *Enormous One*, which supposeth that *Absolute Obligation* upon *Christians*, which You deny. I am sure, I should little deserve the *Name* of a *Christian Bishop*: if I could forget *Christ*; and assume an *Authority*, which can belong to None but Him. Try your own *Limitation*, in your own Case. Ask your self, How You can act with the *Authority* of a *Priest* of the *Church of England*, whilst you maintain that your *Hearers* are not obliged to follow your Dictates, without considering, and examining, whether They be agreeable to the *Will of Christ*: And you will, yourself, answer for Me; or condemn Yourself with Me.

In what follows, p. 36. I find we differ exceedingly about the *Church*, We are speaking of. You have figured to your self a *New Kind of Spiritual Kingdom*; a *Spiritual Kingdom*, which you declare to flourish by *Temporal Methods*: A Kingdom not of *this World*, nourish'd by the *Glories and Favours of This World*, bestow'd upon it by it's *Temporal Nursing Fathers*, and *Nursing Mothers*. Look into the *Papish Countries*, and there you will find something, under that *Denomination*, flourishing in these *Methods*; a part of it fed, and pamper'd, by *Temporal Nurses*; and the other part starved, and miserably treated. But look into the *first Ages*; You will find the *Church of Christ*, a *Spiritual Kingdom* of such inward strength and vigour, as to be able to flourish, equal in All it's parts, (I say, to flourish) not only without, but against, All the *Temporal Powers* of the Earth. If the *Spiritual Kingdom* of *Christ* can be truly supported by *Temporal Encouragements*; or the *Real Enemies* to a *Spiritual Kingdom*, be restrain'd by *Temporal Penalties*; I profess, I am as much for Them, as any Man living, even in that *Kingdom which is not of this World*. But hitherto I acknowledge, I never yet met with any, even *Modern Divine, Juror or Non-juror, High or Low, Church-man*

self, I endeavour to interpret *His Doctrines*, without the Thought that All who hear me, are indispensably obliged to receive My *Interpretation*. You know, Sir, in your Conscience, that I have said not a single Word against any *Interpretative Authority*, even of the weakest Men, but an *Absolute Authority* of Imposing Their Sense upon Christ's Laws. You know that You your self declare, No *Christian* is obliged to receive Any *Interpretation contrary to Christ's Will*; to which therefore He is obliged to compare it always: And supposing it should be found, upon Enquiry, to be agreeable to it; He ought not, by your own Rule, as well as mine, to receive it, before he finds it so. So that We stand, in this, and tall together. If these Consequences are so terrible against Me; they are the very same against You.

2. So again, in the Case of *Impos'd Terms of Communion*; I have declared, in the Sermon, against Nothing but the *Absolute Indispensable Obligation* of *Christians*, to submit to Them, Right, or Wrong, without examining whether They are agreeable to Christ's Will, or not. You in this agree with me; and declare that the Christian People are not obliged to submit, in any Matters *contrary to Christ's Will*: to which therefore, They are obliged to compare Every Thing. What therefore is our Difference? And upon what Accounts must I alone suffer such Outcries: merely because I faithfully and uniformly maintain this Truth; and You think it better to maintain it for once secretly, and in a little corner, and to give it up, whenever You think fit?

3. Again, You go on, *Nor can any Number of Wise and Good Men*, (according to my Reasonings,) *agreeing together in the same Notions, and assembled by Legal Authority, in due Subordination to the Civil Magistrate, tho' with the most Unanimous Consent, establish any Rules, or Ordain any Method of Church-Government, that shall be binding, even for Peace and Quiet's sake, to any Others*. Here again, We must prevail, or fall, together. For, As to Conscience; (which is our Province, as long as We have any Consciences of our own left;) As to Conscience, I say, You have declared in this very Book, (the Force of Truth hath extorted it from you, in the midst of All your Zeal) that No such *Decisions, or Declarations* are binding upon Any *Christian* in the World, *if They be contrary to Christ's Will*; and that No Notion, therefore, of *Peace and Quiet*, (which, by the way, are very soft Words for a Writer to put instead of the Authority and Right of Governours, whilst He is contending Zealously only about these latter;) nay, that No Argument in the World is to persuade any Christian to submit, in Points *contrary to Christ's Will*: To which therefore, He himself is to compare every thing.

This is *your own Rule*. And therefore, *Expose, Vilify, Use* Me as you please: I have this satisfaction, That You come, your self, into this whole Condemnation; and not only You, but indeed All, even Every Man of the Church of *England*; Every Man of Those themselves, who have treated me in the same unhandsome manner upon this Account. It is You, Sir, who, by your own Rule, have cut off all Interpretations of Christ's Laws; All *Impos'd Terms* of Communion; All Obligation to yield to the Mere Authority of the most *Unanimous Synod* in the World; All *Articles and Creeds*, drawn up by fallible Men; All *Acts*, even of *General Councils*; All *Canons, Rules, or Ordinances*. Call them what you please, You have, your Self, cut off All *Absolute Obligation* of Submission; which is exactly the same with taking away the *Absolute Authority* of Church-Governours. You have assured Us, that, let Them gather Themselves together, and frame what Rules They think proper, to Oblige (as your Phrase is,) Others to a *Unity of Profession*, p. 36. You have assured Us, I say, by your former *Limitations*, p. 20. and 26. that Those Others are NOT obliged, without examining into the Will of Christ, by any of their Rules; nay, that They are obliged not to submit, if They find them contrary to His Will. And can.

can there be an *Absolute Authority* in *Those* who make *Those Rules*, whilst there can lie no *Absolute Obligation* to submit to them, upon *Those*, for *whom* They are made? The Difference therefore between *Us*, is only in *Words*: and sometimes, hardly in *Words*.

And now, Sir, if *No Bishop* ought to take his Place in the *Principal Synod*; or to take the *Subscriptions* of *those* whom he *Ordains*; or Exercise almost any *Episcopal Act*, p. 36. unless He claims to Himself an *Absolute Power and Authority*, to which All His Hearers, or His Flock, are so indispensably obliged to submit, in *Matters of Conscience and Eternal Salvation*, that they must not so much as seriously compare His Directions with the *Will of Christ*, to find whether They agree with it, or not; If this be so; I confess my self very unfit for so great an Honour. I disclaim, and disdain it: And so I hope, and believe, doth Every One of my Brethren. I should not act agreeably to your own Rule, if I did not. You declare that *No Christian* ought to submit in *Points* determin'd contrary to *Christ's Will*. And therefore, I hope, I may have your *Consent*, to claim All the *Privileges* of a *Christian Bishop*; without claiming that *Enormous One*, which supposeth that *Absolute Obligation* upon *Christians*, which You deny. I am sure, I should little deserve the Name of a *Christian Bishop*: if I could forget *Christ*; and assume an *Authority*, which can belong to None but *Him*. Try your own Limitation, in your own Case. Ask your self, How You can act with the *Authority* of a *Priest* of the *Church of England*, whilst you maintain that your *Hearers* are not obliged to follow your Dictates, without considering, and examining, whether They be agreeable to the *Will of Christ*: And you will, yourself, answer for Me; or condemn Yourself with Me.

In what follows, p. 36. I find we differ exceedingly about the *Church*, We are speaking of. You have figured to your self a New Kind of *Spiritual Kingdom*; a *Spiritual Kingdom*, which you declare to flourish by *Temporal Methods*: A Kingdom not of *this World*, nourish'd by the Glories and Favours of *This World*, bestow'd upon it by it's *Temporal Nursing Fathers*, and *Nursing Mothers*. Look into the *Popish Countries*, and there you will find something, under that Denomination, flourishing in these Methods; a part of it fed, and pamper'd, by *Temporal Nurses*; and the other part starved, and miserably treated. But look into the *first Ages*; You will find the *Church of Christ*, a *Spiritual Kingdom* of such inward strength and vigour, as to be able to flourish, equal in All it's parts, (I say, to flourish) not only without, but against, All the *Temporal Powers* of the Earth. If the *Spiritual Kingdom* of *Christ* can be truly supported by *Temporal Encouragements*; or the *Real Enemies* to a *Spiritual Kingdom*, be restrain'd by *Temporal Penalties*; I profess, I am as much for Them, as any Man living, even in that *Kingdom* which is not of *this World*. But hitherto I acknowledge, I never yet met with any, even *Modern Divine*, *Juror* or *Non-juror*, *High* or *Low*, *Church-man*

of *Dissenters*, that fix'd the *flourishing Estate* of the Church of Christ, or the *Spiritual Kingdom* of Christ, upon the *Encouragements* of *Temporal Honour and Profit*.

Many *Glorious Things* have I read, and heard, on All sides, about the *flourishing Estate* of the Church of Christ, before *Constantine*; and many melancholy and terrible Accounts of its Condition, from and after that Time: till by degrees it became, in the corrupt Estate of the Church of Rome, the Sink of *Hypocrites*, and the *Sanctuary* of *Atheists*. But I think verily You are the first *Divine* amongst *Protestants*, who has affirmed of the *Reformation*, what must be equally true of *Christianity* it self, and indeed is agreeable to what goes before: that the *Desirable Work* was not compleated, till the *Earthly Rulers*, being *Themselves converted*, establish'd and confirm'd it by *Temporal Sanctions*. A Sentence, Sir, which, if it be duly consider'd, must be very shocking to every *Christian Mind*: unless the *Desirable Thing* in Christ's Kingdom be *Riches and Power*. All, who have not forgot the very Name of *Jesus Christ*, and All his Words relating to this Subject, must know what to think of it. For my self, I will say no more of it, but that it is worthy of Him, who contends professedly for making *Religion* a *Civil Test*; for debasing the most Sacred Thing in the World, into a *Political Tool*, and an *Engine of State*.

I must here add, because I have been very much mistaken and misrepresented in this Matter, that I never affirm'd, or thought, that even the *Greatest Worldly Encouragements*, annex'd to any particular *Professions*, (as for Instance, in the Church of Rome) did totally destroy All Inward Principles of Religion; or do intirely, any where, root out of Every Man's Mind *Sincerity* and *Real Belief*. But I do, and must affirm, as long as I have Eyes to read the *New Testament*, and as long as I have any Measure of Common Sense left; that a Kingdom not of this World, is Not a Kingdom of this World; that the Things which are seen are Temporal, and the Things which are not seen are Eternal; that the Weapons of a Christian's Warfare are not Carnal, but Spiritual; that a Spiritual Kingdom, consider'd as such, cannot in the Nature of the Thing be supported by Temporal Methods; and that *Worldly Grandeur, Great Power, and Riches*, naturally tend to take off Men's Minds from *True Religion*, and the *True Motives* of it. I am sure. This we preach to the Laity: And I am sure, the same Things must have the same Tendency, and ordinarily the same Effect, upon All sorts of Men, in this State of Probation,

If You or any Others, (who are all, at several times, forced to say the same Things,) will please to conclude that I had *Evil Intentions*, and *Bad Views*; I cannot help it. You must, in Consequence, tho' not in Design, charge the same upon the Gospel: In which, I think, there is not a single Passage, tending any other way. I know my own Heart: And know that I had no Other View, but to preach what I found, not in a single Dubious Passage, but in almost Every Page of the *New Testament*. And I say it again, in this Case, that
God

God knows, I preach'd what I found there, not only without the Knowledge of *Any Man living*; but without the least View of pleasing, or displeasing, *Any Man living*. And They who have insinuated Otherwise, neither know *Me*, nor those Rules of Honour and Conscience, by which They ought to conduct *Themselves*.

As to what follows, (pag. 37.) it is universally own'd that the *Papists* were not at first excluded from *Offices*, on the Account of *Mere Religion*: but solely on Account of their *Avowal* of such *Principles*, as naturally and unavoidably destroy the *State*. And I think, it is as universally acknowledged by *All*, even of Those who are accounted the most Zealous *Churchmen*, that a *Test* founded entirely upon their *Principles*, consider'd as *Political*, might be found out, and might be fully effectual: as I doubt not, *Others* might be thought on, agreeable to Christianity and Humanity, which might be a *Truer Security* to the *Established Church* it self, than the *Present* is. But if you esteem *Religion* of that Nature that it ought to be so treated in *Humane Society*, I am confirm'd in *this*, that, as by *The Church of Christ*, you mean something entirely different from what I mean by that *Expression*; so, by *Religion*, you mean quite another thing, than I have been speaking about.

I know of *No Confusion*, *Glorious*, or *Inglorious*, that I have endeavour'd to introduce: as you charge me, (pag. 37. *The Church of Christ* was as *Regular*, as *Orderly*, as *Glorious*, as He design'd it to be, in *All things* belonging to its Nature, before the *World* came in to *Nurture* it; that is, before the *Order*, and *Regularity*, and *Glory*, of *Temporal Sanctions* could come into it.

I have set forth the *Spiritual Nature* of *Christ's Spiritual Kingdom*; and the *Spiritual Sanctions* of *Spiritual Laws*. The Summ of the Whole is, in these *Four Propositions*. *Christ's Kingdom*, is *Christ's Kingdom*. The *Sanctions* of His *Laws*, must be the *Sanctions* which He himself hath fix'd. The *Sanctions* in *Humane Society* ought in reason to be taken from the *Principles* of *Humane Society*. Men ought not to suffer in their *Common Rights*, for the sake of any *Mere Difference* of *Opinion* in *Religion*, consider'd as such.

If any one will infer from hence, that I argue against *All Right* of *Appointing Time*, *Place*, or *Ceremonies*, relating to *Religious Worship*; against the Maintenance and Support of Those who officiate in the *Churches* or *Assemblies* of *Christians*; against the *Order*, or *Decency*, or *Subordination*, belonging to *Societies* of *Christians*; or any Thing against the *Interest* of the *Church of England*: I answer, that I not only do not own such Consequences; but I really do not see Them. As for the *Church of England*, I regard it as a Noble Part of the *Catholick Church*, founded upon the Noble Claim of the *Right* of *Christians* to judge for Themselves: And as for the *Principles* of this Sermon, I maintain, and will maintain, that, if they be not *True*, *Sound*, and *Certain*, there could not rightfully have been such a Thing in being, as the *Church of England*, peculiarly
so

So called; There could have been no such Thing, as this Church, either with or without a Law of Establishment. Nor have I spoke a Word, or admitted a Thought, upon this Subject, but what is built upon the very, and sole Foundation of our Church; and what holds equally against All Persons, in all Churches, whether *Papist*, or *Presbyterian*, or any Other, who contradict the very first Principle of the Church of *England*: and claim to themselves (whether in Word, or in Deed, I do not enquire,) an Authority to which Other Christians are absolutely obliged to submit, without examining the Rules and Directions given, by the Laws of Christ; and without judging for Themselves in that Great Affair, in which They Themselves must be acquitted or condemn'd at the last Day. What I maintain is the very Principle of the Protestant Church of *England*, as well as the Ground-work of the whole Reformation: And the Greatest Service that can be done to the Church of *England*, is, to vindicate and inculcate it.

As for Them, who infer that I am arguing absolutely against Worldly Advantages; They do me the Honour indeed to make me a Disinterested Man: But They may as well infer, that I contend absolutely that All Christians ought to be always in an Afflicted, Low, Starving Condition, because I say, what All the World have said, that the Honours and Profits of this State naturally tend to endanger Sincerity of Religion, which must be built upon a Willing Belief of a Future State; and that the less the World is mix'd with the Affairs of Religion consider'd as such, the more Sincerity, probably, there will be in the Professors of it.

I am far from saying that I will answer for every Sentence, in Every Book of mine, written long ago. I hope No Christian writes Books, to preclude Himself absolutely from enquiring after, or receiving Truth for ever. But as for the whole Tenor of the Reasonableness of Conformity, and the Principles of this Sermon, there is just the same Contradiction between that Book, and Them, as there is between my sincere Endeavour to convince a Man of an Error; and my not murdering, or injuring Him, if He be not convinced by what I say: or exactly the same, as there is between your vindicating the Church of *England* with so Masterly a Zeal, as you have here done; and telling the *Dissenters*, as you do at the same time, that They are obliged not to comply with Any Thing, whether Doctrine, or Injunction, contrary to Christ's Will.

I wish you would explain the last Sentence of your Letter. I am far from designing either to fix Consequences upon You, which you do not own: Or any particular Interpretation upon your Words; even tho' it be the Interpretation, of which alone, both Friends and Enemies, as far as I can hear, agree them to be capable. But the Case is this. You plainly reproach Me with an *Opposition*, to my present Practice, to my former Resisting Doctrines. My present Practice is, All that Zeal, Duty, and Submission, which can result from the

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the sincerest Affection to King GEORGE : My Former Resisting Doctrines, all the World knows, never taught any Resistance ; but to the Worst of Princes, engaged in the Total Destruction of the Civil Rights of a Whole Nation. The Natural Thought is this, that *No one can reproach me with any Contradiction in this Matter, without implying (too strongly, I fear, to be denied), that his present Majesty is ——— what I care not to repeat.*

This puts me in mind to congratulate You upon the Publick Honour lately done You, so soon after a Performence which ends with so remarkable a Sting. I have no Civilities to spend any Time in thanking You for. Perhaps, your Notion of Religion is, that it forbids You to shew Any to One from whom, You sometimes imagine, you differ. The Want of Them ; and the Abundance of Some-thing in their stead, I pray God to forgive. I neither return You like Usage my Self : Nor am I pleas'd Any one else should. I sincerely wish You All Happiness here and hereafter : and am,

S I R,

Yours, &c.

BENJAMIN BANGOR.

F I N I S.